

ment perceptible was the increase in the size of her body as she swiftly approached. Three times at least I was looking directly at the approaching bird *and did not see her at all* because the lines of her wings and body so completely harmonized with the surroundings, and the front view was comparatively so small.

In alighting the bird struck heavily and often the dead branches were completely broken off. Her every movement combined power, grace, and swiftness in an amazing degree, and only once, as she sped by me did I succeed in whacking her with a stick. She seemed so surprised at my ability to fight back that after my clumsy victory she was quiet for over ten minutes and viewed me pensively from the top of a distant tree!

The bird often sat upright with one foot drawn up among the belly feathers or protruding a short distance. The fluffy under tail coverts were very prominent and always obscured the base of the tail from the front by sticking far out on either side.

PENNSYLVANIA BOARD OF GAME COMMISSIONERS,
HARRISBURG, PA.

OBSERVATIONS ON SHORE BIRDS IN CENTRAL OKLAHOMA IN 1924

BY MARGARET MORSE NICE

By great good fortune for the birds and us, the wet winter and spring of 1924 changed what had been a low swampy spot in the midst of a cornfield into a shallow pond, not far from our home in Norman, Oklahoma. The farmer who owned the land did not share our view of the matter for he put in an elaborate drain, but luckily for the ducks, the shorebirds and us, he made the mistake of placing it too high, so the pond remained and the birds flourished. Our first visit was made on April 4; from then until June 10 we made trips to it two or three times a week, except for the first ten days in May when we did not go at all. All the birds but a pair of Killdeers were transients, there being no suitable cover for nests for the few species that do breed in the region.

Not many birds except ducks and shorebirds frequented this pond. Of these, the Black Terns were the most entrancing as they coursed gracefully over the water. Twenty were seen May 11 and about fifty the next day (most of them following a farmer who was harrowing a nearby field); from the 14th to 20th there were thirty to forty, but after that their numbers diminished until only two were seen May 30;

none were noted June 1 and 8, but three flew over on the 10th. A single Least Tern was recorded on May 25. Five Coots were observed May 11, ten on May 15, and after that from two to five at nearly every visit until June 1: sometimes they marched about in the neighboring corn field. A Bittern was flushed May 14. On May 25 and June 8 a male Red-wing Blackbird sat on a corn stalk and sang. Only four swallows were recorded: two Purple Martins on April 30 and one Barn and one Bank Swallow on May 25.

THE DUCKS

Ducks were seen at every visit but two—April 11 and 17; on the latter date they had apparently been frightened away by two dogs that were rushing about in the water barking at the shorebirds. They were sometimes abundant and usually fairly tame. Blue-winged Teal and Shovellers were the most common. The former were seen in numbers varying from ten to thirty from April 6 to May 20; after that one male was noted May 23 and June 1, while three were recorded June 10. They often would rest on the bank and waddle deliberately down to the pond for all the world like domestic fowl. Eight Shovellers were noted April 4, twelve on April 6 and 8, but only two on the 15th; from May 11 to 20 there were about ten at the pond, but after that none until May 30, when three males were seen: these were present at each subsequent visit, having been joined by a fourth male on June 10. Pin-tails were observed in small flocks from April 4 to 8; after that only one bird was seen: he must have been crippled as he never attempted to fly; he was last recorded May 11. From three to fourteen Scaups—we were always so busy studying shorebirds that we never tried to puzzle out whether they were Greater or Lesser—were noted from May 11 to 25: there were usually two males and five or seven females. One female on May 30 was the last one seen. Three species were recorded once each: six Baldplates on April 6, three Green-winged Teal on April 30 (one had been shot by a boy), and two male Canvas-backs on May 23.

THE SHOREBIRDS

Shorebirds were seen at every visit from April 4 to June 8; two days later the last had left. Most of them were delightfully tame until near the end of the season: from May 20 the birds were timid and difficult to approach. Probably these later birds were a different set from the earlier: on May 15 there was a wonderful array of shorebirds—seven species and at least sixty individuals, but on the 18th only one Yellow-leg and four Semipalmated Sandpipers were to be

seen. Two days later there were four species and about forty individuals—"all very scary", according to my notebook. By the 30th there were nearly a hundred birds of four species, these were moderately timid. June 1 only twelve shorebirds were left and by the 8th four.

Twice when one bird out of a flock was shot, most of the others came flying back to see what the trouble was, hovering over the place of the accident; this did not happen, however, in other instances. On April 8, an *Accipiter* came flying by; instantly all the shore birds sprang into the air and flew wildly about, but the ducks remained placidly in the water.

Specimens of six species were collected by L. B. Nice; these are indicated by asterisks.

Wilson Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*). On April 5 a male appeared and joined company with three Lesser Yellow-legs; the next day he was flocking with the Dowitchers. No others were seen until May 11 when fourteen of both sexes of these dainty birds were swimming about. The next day to our disappointment all had left. Two males on May 14 and 15 were the only others observed.

Wilson Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*). These were common in the grass about the pond April 5 and 6; while a few would be flushed as late as the 22nd. Only once did we see one at the pond itself; all the rest of the time during our visits they remained concealed in the vegetation.

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus scolopaceus*). On April 5 four of these curious birds suddenly flew down into the pond and then stood stock still for a long time—the greatest contrast to the busy activities of most of the shorebirds. One Dowitcher did preen itself a little with its absurdly long bill. At last they flew with a cry, showing their narrow white rumps. They were seen April 6 and 8, always keeping close together. They were in winter plumage.

*Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*). Six of these birds in summer plumage were seen on May 14 and 15. They stayed in a compact flock by themselves.

*Pectoral Sandpiper (*Pisobia maculata*). These were first seen on April 11 and were noted at nearly every subsequent visit until May 25. There were usually about eight or ten of them, but on April 24 there were as many as twenty. They showed no clannish tendency, running about independently and flying with the Semipalmated Sandpipers.

*White-rumped Sandpiper (*Pisobia fuscicollis*). This bird was first identified on May 12 when one was collected; we might well have overlooked it previously. Two were noted May 20, four or more on May 30 and two as late as June 8. The squeaky "jeet-jeet" as they flew was quite distinct from the noise of the Semipalmated Sandpipers with whom they associated.

Least Sandpiper (*Pisobia minutilla*). Only one of these was identified; we distinguished it from the Semipalmated Sandpipers by its yellowish rather than black legs. It was a very tame little bird. May 11 was the date of its appearance.

*Red-backed Sandpiper (*Pelidna alpina sakhalina*). These birds were the most exciting find of all for they had never been previously reported from Oklahoma. Four of them in striking summer plumage visited the pond on May 15; they stayed together in one flock. The specimen collected constitutes the first record for the State.

*Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Ereunetes pusillus*). This was the most abundant species and was seen for the longest period—from April 4 till June 8, when only two were left. Their numbers in April and May varied from about twenty to nearly a hundred except on May 18 when only four were present. We decided after much study that all the "Peeps" that we examined through field glasses belonged to this species; 1st, because all had black legs; 2nd, they all looked greyish; 3rd, their bills all looked alike. The two specimens taken proved our judgment correct.

It was an entertaining sight to see these little birds that were running in and out of the water all day take regular baths just like any Song Sparrow.

Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*). These great shorebirds were a thrilling sight. The first, in the chestnut summer plumage, was discovered May 11 feeding in the weeds only fifteen feet from us; it was so tame that we were enabled to study it at leisure. Three others were seen on the other side of the pond. The next day we took the gun hoping to collect a godwit, as they had never been reported from the State, but not one was to be seen. On the 15th, however, we saw three in winter plumage; they were wary and flew away showing their white rumps. In the afternoon three flew away again. Later in looking over the birds in the museum of the University of Oklahoma (the museum is very inadequately housed in a basement and its collections difficult of access) we came upon three specimens of the Hudsonian Godwit which had been collected by E. D. Crabb in Canadian County, Oklahoma, in 1911.

Greater Yellow-legs (*Totanus melanoleucus*). Both Yellow-legs were present in small numbers at nearly every visit; we were thus enabled to distinguish them by direct comparison as well as by their notes. Greater Yellow-legs were seen from April 8 to May 30.

Lesser Yellow-legs (*Totanus flavipes*). These were seen from April 4 to June 1. Neither Yellow-legs seems to be a clannish bird with its own kind as were the Dowitchers, Red-backed and Stilt Sandpipers, but each ran bobbing about more or less independently of others of its kind.

Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* subs?). Five of these great birds furnished the special excitement of May 12; they were plain looking enough when seen at rest but astonishingly striking as they flew with loud cries exhibiting their black and white wings.

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*). These teetering little creatures were seen on only four visits: one on May 11 and 23, and two on May 25 and 30.

Killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus*). A pair were present near the pond all the season and must have nested nearby. On May 30 and June 1 another pair was in evidence.

*Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*). Only one of these little Ring-necked Plovers was seen, May 15; it was collected, since the only previous instance of its occurrence in the State was a sight record.

AMHERST, MASS.

THE WHIP-POOR-WILL: ITS PROSPECTS OF SURVIVAL IN SOUTHERN IOWA

BY E. D. NAUMAN

During the decade from 1875 to 1885 my home was with my parents beside an extensive forest on the bank of Clear Creek in the eastern part of Keokuk County, Iowa.

At that time and in that locality Whip-poor-wills were regarded as among our common birds. Judging from the frequency of their calls in every direction at night, as well as the numbers flushed in daytime, I feel sure that they must have been as common as Robins were at the time. However, the Robin has steadily increased in number, while the Whip-poor-will has just as steadily decreased.

During the summer of 1879, I think it was, a Whip-poor-will took the queer notion of alighting on our cabin doorstep to chant, evening after evening, for a fortnight or more. And we had both